

ACTION
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Department of State

8/13/79

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

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ACTION H4-05

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INFO OCT-81 ARA-11 ADS-DB L-03 10-14 /034 V
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P 132009Z AUG 79
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1906

BUENOS AIRES 6590

E.O. 12065 GDS 6-13-85 (SACKETT, KENNETH) OR-V
TAGS SHUM, AR
SUBJECT (U) REPORTS OF WORSENING CONDITIONS AT RAWSON PRISON

REF: STATE 179022

1. ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: EMBASSY REFUGEE OFFICER RECENTLY VISITED RAWSON PRISON AND SUBSEQUENTLY DISCUSSED RAWSON SITUATION WITH

RAWSON CONDITIONS ARE ABOUT WHAT THEY WERE - TOUGH BUT NOT INHUMAN. END SUMMARY.

3. DURING THE RAWSON PRISON VISIT OF JULY 26, EMBASSY REFUGEE OFFICER INTERVIEWED NORBERTO FORESTI (PROTECT), A PEN PRISONER DETAINED AT THE PRISON SINCE DECEMBER 1975. MR FORESTI STATED THAT THERE HAS BEEN "NO NOTICEABLE IMPROVEMENTS" AT THE PRISON IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, BUT NEITHER DID HE SPEAK OF A WORSENING SITUATION. HE WAS MOST CRITICAL OF THE HARSH DISCIPLINE AND FORCED ISOLATION HE ENDURES. EACH CELL BLOCK OF APPROXIMATELY 35 PRISONERS IS A COMPLETELY ISOLATED UNIT, WITH NO CONTACT WHATSOEVER WITH ANY OTHER CELL BLOCK. EACH CELL BLOCK IS HEATED BY A SMALL GAS HEATER LOCATED IN THE CENTRAL WALKWAY AND A SMALL AMOUNT OF HOT WATER IS AVAILABLE FOR BATHING. MR FORESTI DID NOT COMPLAIN ABOUT THE FOOD.

4. SINCE HIS LAST VISIT TO RAWSON, THE EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER HAS NOTICED, IF NOT IMPROVEMENTS, AT LEAST AN ATTEMPT BY PRISON OFFICIALS TO IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF THE PRISON. THE EXTERIOR OF THE MAIN PRISON BUILDING HAS BEEN REPAIRED AND THE BARS ON THE WINDOWS HAVE BEEN PAINTED A LIGHT BLUE COLOR. THE VISITOR'S ROOM NOW HAS ORANGE TRIM AND HAS A FUNCTIONING GAS HEATER. AS IN THE OTHER PRISONS, PRISONERS HAVE BEEN ISSUED NEW DARK BLUE OR LIGHT BROWN UNIFORMS. (THE COLOR OF THE UNIFORM HAS NO SIGNIFICANCE. THE DARK BLUE UNIFORMS WERE MANUFACTURED LAST YEAR BUT NEVER ISSUED AND THE LIGHT BROWN UNIFORMS ARE THIS YEAR'S MODEL.)

5. WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT RECREATION, COMMUNICATION AND VISITING PRIVILEGES MR FORESTI STATED THAT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE CHANGE FROM PAST PRACTICES. RECREATION AND COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE PRISON IS STILL SEVERELY LIMITED BUT FAMILY VISITATION AND MAIL PRIVILEGES ARE MAINTAINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NATIONAL PRISON CODE REGULATIONS.

6. MR FORESTI STATED THAT DUE TO THE STRICT BAN ON INTER-CELL BLOCK COMMUNICATION, HE DID NOT KNOW ANY PRISONERS IN ANY OF THE OTHER CELL BLOCKS AND HAD NO INFORMATION AS TO THE POSSIBILITIES OF DESAPARECIDOS RESURFACING AT RAWSON PRISON.

7. ON AUGUST 9, EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER MET WITH

FELT THERE HAD BEEN A "DECLINE" IN PRISON CONDITIONS GENERALLY IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS. THE ASSERTION IS ONE WE WILL WANT TO HAVE IN MIND

IN FUTURE TALKS WITH PRISONERS.

THE PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PRISONERS WAS ADEQUATE AND THAT THE ISOLATION OF PRISON LIFE HAS BEEN THE CAUSE OF MOST OF THE PROBLEMS

WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT "DESAPARECIDOS" HAVE RECENTLY RESURFACED AT ANY OF THE PRISONS HOUSING POLITICAL DETAINEES.

THEY HAVE NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER THAT DESAPARECIDOS ARE RE-APPEARING IN ANY OF THE PRISONS THEY HAVE VISITED.

B. CONOFF WILL VISIT RAWSON AT THE END OF THIS MONTH AND WILL REPORT AGAIN.
CASTRO

Then what is happening to the clandestine prisoners as the secret detention centers are being closed?
Argentina

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

() Release (X) Excise () Deny

Exemption(s): B1

Declassify: (X) In Part () In Full

(X) Classify as C () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date 5/3/01 Declassify on 5/3/11 Reason 25X6

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